

Civil Rights

The attorneys at Brown, Goldstein & Levy have a long history of representing clients who have had their civil rights violated. We have successfully enforced constitutional and statutory rights that protect individuals from discrimination in the workplace, in public accommodations, in housing, in education, and at the polling place, and to protect our clients from being treated differently on the basis of their race, gender, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Our attorneys have served as counsel or in an advisory capacity on disability civil rights issues for disability advocacy organizations throughout the state of Maryland and nationwide. We have also worked with state and federal enforcement agencies to effectively implement the civil rights laws for people with disabilities.

In 2017, Eve Hill and Gina Kline joined BGL from the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where Eve was Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and Gina was Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

Selected by their peers, Andy Levy, Joshua Treem, and Joe Espo are listed in *Best Lawyers in America* 2019 in the field of Civil Rights. Dan Goldstein, who recently retired from the practice of law, was selected as *Best Lawyers* 2018 "Lawyer of the Year" for Baltimore Civil Rights Law.

Andy Freeman is the General Counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland and a member of the ACLU's Committee on Litigation and Legal Priorities, and Andy Levy served as the Chair of the Maryland Commission on Disabilities from 2010-2015.

U.S. News & World Report and *Best Lawyers* ranked Brown, Goldstein & Levy Tier 1 Baltimore in the area of Civil Rights Law in the 2018 "Best Law Firms" list.

Representative Cases

Wrongful Conviction/Wrongful Arrest

- Obtained a \$9M settlement on behalf of a man who was wrongfully convicted and incarcerated for 21 years after Baltimore homicide detectives concealed exculpatory evidence.
- Won a substantial verdict and settlement on behalf of a man who was wrongfully arrested and assaulted in response to asking a Baltimore police officer for his badge number.

Disability Rights

- Obtained a court order holding the District of Columbia responsible for providing services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to eligible DC residents who are incarcerated in federal facilities.
- Successfully represented a deaf District of Columbia resident who was summoned for grand jury service in Superior Court and not allowed to serve because the court refused to pay for an interpreter.
- Won a ruling requiring a public school district to provide braille instruction to a blind student.
- Resolved wheelchair access barriers to boarding dolphin-watching tour boats.
- Represent a group of disabled employees of the Social Security Administration in a class action case that alleges that the Social Security Administration discriminates against employees with targeted disabilities by creating a glass ceiling and limiting promotions and other career advancement opportunities.

Racial Discrimination

- Litigated series of Voting Rights Act lawsuits that brought the first African-American officeholders to many Maryland town and county councils.
- Obtained a class-action settlement that will provide 2,400 vouchers (in addition to 1,800 already obtained under partial consent decree) to enable poor African-American families to move from public housing and other segregated areas of Baltimore City to communities of opportunity throughout the Baltimore region.
- Won a \$2 million verdict against a major homebuilder for discriminatory advertising that exclusively used white models.

LGBT

- Represented a Harford County student in demanding that the Harford County Public Schools stop illegally blocking internet access to information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues.

Foster Care Abuse

- Won a \$1.5 million settlement from the State of Maryland in a civil rights claim against workers at the Baltimore City Department of Social Services who failed to protect the safety of a boy abused while in foster care.

Disability Rights - Access to Technology

- Successfully negotiated a settlement agreement requiring the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to provide all Medicare-related communications to blind individuals in accessible formats and to ensure that the Medicare website, including all beneficiary forms, is accessible.
- On behalf of the National Federation of the Blind and three blind Ohio voters, secured an injunction requiring the Ohio Secretary of State to make his website accessible; successfully appealed trial court's dismissal of plaintiffs' claim for an accessible method of absentee voting to the Sixth Circuit, leading to Ohio adopting accessible absentee voting in time for November 2018 election.
- Successfully negotiated a settlement agreement requiring the manufacturer of tablets used in Applebees' restaurants to make their tablets accessible to blind customers and for the Applebees' franchisor to license only accessible tablets.
- Successfully negotiated an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education that will make student loan information - websites, forms, and documents related to the department's Direct Loan program - accessible to blind applicants and borrowers.
- On behalf of students with disabilities, obtained settlements with colleges and universities to ensure equal access to textbooks, websites, and activities.
- Obtained a ruling that requires the Maryland Board of Elections to make its online ballot-marking tool available to voters with disabilities in the November, 2014 election.
- Groundbreaking U.S. Court of Appeals victory ruling in favor of the National Federation of the Blind in a copyright infringement case the Authors Guild, Inc. had brought against university libraries planning to digitize more than 10 million published works in their collections.
- Successfully negotiated an agreement between the National Federation of the Blind and H&R Block to make H&R Block's website, online tax preparation products, and mobile applications fully accessible to blind taxpayers.
- Successfully negotiated a settlement agreement with PARCC, Inc., a nonprofit corporation that was established in 2013 by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers in which PARCC will make its practice tests accessible to blind students by the time the tests are deployed in Spring 2014.
- Settled a lawsuit brought by four blind patrons against the Free Library of Philadelphia that began lending NOOK Simple Touch e-readers, which are inaccessible to patrons who are blind and do not use text-to-speech technology. The settlement requires the library to purchase ten accessible e-readers to supplement the devices it has already purchased, and within four years will use only accessible e-reading devices. The library will also incorporate an accessibility requirement into its technology procurement contracts.
- Represented two blind students and the National Federation of the Blind in a suit against Florida State University, alleging that FSU's Department of Mathematics discriminated against the students by failing to provide them with proper accommodations so that they could successfully complete required math courses for their respective degree programs.

- On behalf of the National Federation of the Blind and blind individuals, won injunctions and obtained terms that required the Law School Admissions Council website, including all the applications to law school, to be fully accessible to blind users.
- Won on appeal the right of deaf sports fans to equal access to aural content broadcast at the Washington Redskins' FedEx Field, including lyrics to the music played during the game, upholding the groundbreaking 2008 ruling regarding the scope of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Won a landmark victory on behalf of a blind law school graduate against the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE), the administrator of a test virtually every law school graduate must take before getting a law license, to allow a blind 2009 UCLA Law School graduate, to use screen-reading computer software to take the "multistate" portion of the California bar exam. The ruling is significant not only for blind law school graduates, but for every test-taker with a disability who needs accommodations on a test.
- Represented the National Federation of the Blind and a blind resident of Baltimore, Maryland, in filing an administrative complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, asserting that one of the Department's websites, U.S.A. Learns, violates Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act because it is inaccessible to blind people who use text-to-speech screen access technology or braille displays to access information on the Internet.
- Won a \$6 million settlement from Target for the National Federation of the Blind for damages to plaintiffs in California unable to use Target's online site and reached an agreement requiring Target to implement internal changes to make its site more accessible to the blind, with assistance from the NFB.

Honors

- Ranked in *Best Lawyers in America* in the field of Civil Rights, 2016-present
- *Best Lawyers* 2018 "Lawyer of the Year," Civil Rights Law
- Kenneth Jernigan Award, an award given to someone who has made a significant contribution to the blindness community
- Baltimore Metropolitan Tier 1 ranking in the 2018 Best Law Firms list by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Best Lawyers* in the area of Civil Rights Law
- Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs' Outstanding Achievement Award in the Field of Fair Housing
- The American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland's Outstanding Dedication Award
- Women's Law Center's Beatty Memorial Award for significant contributions to women's rights
- Maryland Bar Foundation "Professional Legal Excellence Award for Advancement of the Rights of the Disadvantaged"
- Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc.'s inaugural Dickens Warfield Fair Housing Award for years of support in successfully advancing BNI's fair housing litigation
- American Bar Association's 2011 Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights, presented each year to an individual who has made significant contributions to further the rights, dignity, and access to justice for people with disabilities

Greg Care
Joe Espo
Andy Freeman
Eve Hill
Gina Kline
Sharon Krevor-Weisbaum
Emily Levenson
Andy Levy
Stu Simms
Joshua Treem
Jessie Weber